6B

Information/Action

Professional Services Committee

Implementation of the Accreditation System

Executive Summary: Per Commission direction at the May/June 2006 meeting, this item presents the first six recommendations developed by the Accreditation Study Work Group and the Committee on Accreditation for consideration and action by the Commission. Further, this agenda item presents a plan for establishing a schedule for site visits in 2007-08 and for moving forward with a number of accreditation related activities.

Recommended Action: Approval of the first six recommendations proposed by the Accreditation Study Work Group and the Committee on Accreditation and action to implement the accreditation system with site visits beginning in the 2007-08 year.

Presenters: Cheryl Hickey, Consultant, Teri Clark, Administrator, Lawrence Birch, Director, Professional Services Division.

Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ♦ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ♦ Assess and monitor the efficacy of the Accreditation System, Examination System, and State and Federal Funded Programs.

Implementation of the Accreditation System

Executive Summary

At the May 31-June 1, 2006 Commission meeting, the members of the Commission expressed their desire to consider, and possibly act upon, the recommendations of Accreditation Study Work Group (Work Group) at the July 31-August 1, 2006 Commission meeting. These recommendations were originally presented to the Commission at the October 2005 meeting at which time staff was directed to seek additional feedback in the form of an electronic survey. The survey data was presented to the Commission at the April 2006 meeting.

At the May 31-June 1, 2006 Commission meeting, members also expressed their desire to schedule state accreditation visits beginning in 2007-08.

Because the Accreditation Study Work Group recommendations were numerous, and because of the limited time available at Commission meetings to deliberate, staff has, in consultation with the Chair, brought forward a group of recommendations at this meeting, to be followed by additional recommendations brought forward at the September 2006 meeting. Still other recommendations can be brought to the Commission when further work is completed by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and stakeholder group as appropriate.

The recommendations presented in this item include Topics 1-6 from the original set of recommendations. These topics address the basic structure of a revised system and are the most critical in need of addressing as soon as possible if a revised system is to be operational in time for site visits in 2007-08. The remaining recommendations, while important, can be deliberated and acted upon by the Commission at future meetings.

Recommendations:

In order to meet the timetable discussed by the Commission at the May 31-June 1, 2006 Commission meeting, staff presents the following recommendations for moving accreditation forward:

1) That the Commission act to start accreditation site visits in 2007-2008.

2) That the Commission endorse the COA priorities for consideration in scheduling accreditation visits for 2007-08 and beyond.

3) That the Commission act on the first six topics of the recommendations presented by the Accreditation Study Work Group and the COA

Upon Commission action on the above recommendations, staff would undertake the following accreditation activities:

a. Staff would return to the Commission as soon as possible with proposed language for a new *Accreditation Framework* for consideration and adoption by the Commission (for those topics within *the Framework* where there is Commission approval).

b. Staff would bring the recommendations for Topics 7-10 and 13 to the September 2006 Commission meeting for consideration and possible action.

c. Staff would continue to work with stakeholders on revisions to the Common Standards in order to more closely align them with the objectives of the revised system such as a focus on candidate outcomes, and return as soon as possible to the Commission with draft revised language for review.

d. Staff would continue to work on Topics 6a-6e, 11, and 12 with the COA and the stakeholders, and return to the Commission for consideration and possible action, when appropriate.

e. Staff would continue to work with the stakeholders and, where appropriate, the Office of the Secretary of Education on determining the nexus between state accreditation and national accreditation.

f. Staff would to continue to work with the COA and stakeholders on Experimental Program Standards, Preconditions, Blended Standards and required elements topics and return to the Commission for consideration, direction, and possible action, when appropriate.

Introduction

At the May/June 2006 Commission meeting, information was presented on a number of topics related to accreditation (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2006-05/2006-05-4A.pdf). The Commission was provided a historical schedule of accreditation site visits including costs for visits that took place in the 2000-2001 year or later. The site visit listing identified institutions that have not had a site visit since initial accreditation or have had only a formative visit—a formative visit means that no accreditation decision was made by the Committee on Accreditation (COA). The Commission directed staff to return to the July/August 2006 meeting with additional information on implementing the accreditation process, including the Work Group's proposal for revising the system.

Background

The Accreditation Study Work Group (Work Group) began working in June 2004 to review and suggest possible revisions to the Commission's accreditation system. The Work Group has communicated frequently with the COA during the review process. At the October 2005 Commission meeting, the Work Group and the COA presented their recommendations for revisions to California's educator preparation accreditation system to the Commission in an agenda item (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2005-10/2005-10-6C.pdf). The Commission requested that additional stakeholder input be gathered regarding the Work Group and COA's recommendations. An online survey was developed and available from December 6, 2005 through February 10, 2006 on the Commission's website. The results of the field survey were presented to the Commission at the April 2006 Commission meeting

(http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2006-04/2006-04-2A.pdf). The survey data showed support for the recommendations developed by the Work Group.

At the April 2006 Commission meeting, Secretary of Education Alan Bersin asked the Commission to consider the nexus between national accreditation and California's system of accreditation. As a result, the Commission asked staff to return with additional information on accreditation, including information on the two national accrediting agencies: National Council for Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC).

In response to this request, staff presented an item at the June 2006, Commission meeting that included information about NCATE and TEAC and noted that additional information and dialogue with these two agencies would be necessary to respond appropriately to the Secretary's request. The Commission's discussion at the June 1, 2006 meeting resulted in direction to staff that was twofold:

1) Recognizing that there are issues with respect to national accreditation needing further examination and discussion, continue to investigate the nexus with national accrediting bodies and report back to the Commission

2) Bring an agenda item back to the Commission at the July/August 2006 meeting that would allow the Commission to consider and act upon the revisions presented by the Accreditation Study Work Group, begin the implementation of the accreditation system as soon as possible with site visits as soon as 2007-08, and to prioritize those institutions that have never had a review since initial accreditation or those with the greatest period of time between site visits to be placed early in the accreditation site visit schedule.

In providing this direction to staff, the Commission members voiced interest in continuing the dialogue with NCATE and TEAC but made clear that this was an effort that can be considered and acted upon at a later time. Members of the Commission expressed an interested in acting upon the implementation of accreditation system at the July/August 2006 meeting that considers the importance of the NCATE and TEAC dialogue, but gives priority to implementing the state accreditation system.

Accreditation System

The Commission's accreditation system is governed by California Education Code, the *Accreditation Framework*, and the *Accreditation Handbook*. Education Code sections 44370-44374 are critical to understanding the underlying philosophy, purpose, and duties of California's accreditation system. The Education Code defines specific objectives and responsibilities for California's accreditation system. The Commission is responsible for adopting policies that further define the accreditation system. These adopted policies are what constitute the *Accreditation Framework*. The *Accreditation Handbook* is the procedural manual for the system and is developed by the Committee on Accreditation. Table 1, below, illustrates the division of responsibility and authority for the current accreditation system.

Table 1: Roles in Implementing the Accreditation System

Roles and Responsibilities in California's Accreditation System			
California Legislature	Commission	Committee on Accreditation	Commission Staff
↓	↓	↓	↓
State Law Establishing the System	Sets Accreditation Policy Within the System	Develops Accreditation Procedures	Implements the Policies and Procedures as defined in the *Accredita*tion *Framework* and *Accreditation Handbook*
↓	↓	↓	
Education Code 44370-44374	Adopts *Accreditation Framework* 1993 **To be revised**	Adopts *Accreditation Handbook* 2001 **To be revised**	

Accreditation Framework and Accreditation Handbook

The current policies of the Commission relating to Accreditation were adopted in 1993 and are contained in the *Accreditation Framework.* The *Framework* contains eight sections. The full *Accreditation Framework* can be found on the Commission's web site at http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-reports.html. The Commission's responsibilities are described in Section 1 of the *Accreditation Framework*, most of which are directly tied to language in the Education Code. Section 2 of the *Accreditation Framework* defines the functions of the Committee on Accreditation The Committee on Accreditation is a group of twelve educators—half from K-12 and half from higher education—appointed by the Commission. The Committee on Accreditation is charged with the implementation of the accreditation system based on the policies the Commission has adopted.

The Committee on Accreditation has developed, over time, the *Accreditation Handbook.* The handbook was originally adopted in 1997 and a revised version was last adopted in 2001. The *Accreditation Handbook* describes the procedural implementation of the accreditation system for institutions under review, educators that volunteer to be reviewers, and others interested in California's accreditation system. The full text of the *Accreditation Handbook* can be found at http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/PDF/accreditationhandbook.pdf

Proposed Implementation Timeline

Given the Commission's direction at the May/June 2006 Commission meeting to begin accreditation activities, a number of tasks need to be completed. The table below identifies some of the major tasks needing to be completed. The timeline is not linear, in that many tasks overlap while others must be done after an action by the Commission or the COA.

Table 2: Implement the Accreditation System

Tasks to Implement the Accreditation System	Type of Decision	Required Action	Timeline
Take action to implement accreditation site visits in 07-08	Policy	Commission Action	August 2006
Adopt an accreditation system, direct staff to work with the COA on a revised *Accreditation Framework*	Policy	Commission Action	August 2006 September 2006
Develop priorities for the new accreditation site visit schedule	Procedure	COA Action, Report to Commission	June 2006
Develop the accreditation site visit schedule based on priorities, assign each institution to a year in the cycle	Implementation	Staff work, Report to COA and Commission	August 2006
Notify all program sponsors of site visits beginning in 2007-2008	Implementation	Staff work	August 2006
Revise *Accreditation Framework*	Procedure	COA and Staff work	Aug. 2006- Jan. 2007
Adopt revised *Accreditation Framework*	Policy	Commission Action	Sept. 2006- Jan. 2007
Revise *Accreditation Handbook*	Implementation	Staff work	Aug. 2006- April 2007
Adopt the revised *Accreditation Handbook*	Procedure	COA Action Report to Commission	April 2007- June 2007
*Develop clear guidelines for: -Biennial reports -Program review in 4th year -Site visits, team selection, and interview procedures	Implementation	Staff work COA Action	June 2006- June 2007

Tasks to Implement the Accreditation System	Type of Decision	Required Action	Timeline
*Develop training for BIR members	Implementation	Staff work COA Action	June 2006- June 2007
Provide technical assistance to program sponsors	Implementation	Staff work	Sept. 2006- June 2007

* Portions of this task are addressed at a policy level and will included in the revised *Accreditation Framework.* Other portions are procedural and will included in the *Accreditation Handbook* which is developed based on the adopted policy.

Scheduling of Site Visits

Scheduling site visits is one of the many steps in implementing the Commission's Accreditation System. The COA acts to create procedures that will implement the policy decisions of the Commission. At the May/June 2006 meeting, the COA discussed what procedures should be followed by staff to create an accreditation site visit schedule in the event that the Commission takes action at a future meeting to start accreditation site visits. The priorities listed below are the procedures that the COA adopted for use in the scheduling of accreditation site visits.

Priorities for Consideration in Scheduling Accreditation Site Visits

1. NCATE visits that are already scheduled

2. Institutions/Program Sponsors that have not had an accreditation visit of any kind following initial institutional accreditation

3. Institutions/Program Sponsors that have only had a formative visit

4. Length of time since the last accreditation site visit, length of time since initial institutional accreditation

5. Scheduling approximately equal number of site visits per year

6. Creating a balance in the size of teams needed each year

7. Information reviewed as part of the interim reporting (biennial reports and program review)

Recommended Revisions to the Accreditation System

At the October 2005 Commission meeting, the Committee on Accreditation and the Accreditation Study Work Group submitted recommendations for a revised accreditation system. A total of 18 proposed recommendations were offered by the stakeholders. This item includes the proposed preferred option, the rationale for the preferred option for six of these topics. Other options that were considered by the stakeholder group can be found on the Commission's website at http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2005-10/2005-10-6C.pdf.

In an effort to provide the Commission optimal opportunities to fully discuss the recommendations in a deliberative manner within the time limitations of the Commission meeting, staff has prioritized the recommendations for consideration and action.

Recommendations Requiring Priority Consideration by the Commission
The first category includes those recommendations central to the proposed new system and that define its structure. It would be beneficial for the Commission to discuss and come to agreement on the direction of these items. These include the following recommendations:

Topic 1: Purpose of the Accreditation System

Preferred Option: **1a: Revise the *Accreditation Framework* to reflect four broad purposes of accreditation:**

1) To ensure accountability;

2) To ensure high quality and effective preparation programs;

3) To ensure adherence to credential standards; and

4) To encourage and support on-going program improvement.

Preferred Option: **1b: The essential attributes of accreditation defined in the *Framework* should be revised to include:**

1) The professional nature of accreditation;

2) Knowledgeable participants;

3) Breadth and flexibility;

4) Intensity;

5) Efficiency; and

6) Cost effectiveness.

Background: The *Framework* adopted in 1993 outlines the purposes of accreditation as they were defined at that point in time. The Committee on Accreditation and the Accreditation Study Work Group reviewed these purposes to determine whether they reflected current needs and addressed the current educational policy environment. This discussion was a critically important first step as a common understanding and agreement about the purposes of accreditation was a necessary foundation to building a system that achieves these objectives.

Rationale: After examining the purposes of accreditation as defined by other states, other accrediting bodies, and other professions, the Committee on Accreditation and the Accreditation Study Work Group suggest that the language within the *Framework* be revised. The proposed language would better align with generally accepted purposes of accreditation, simplify the language to facilitate public understanding, and recognize the importance of accreditation in program improvement – a purpose not explicitly defined in the 1995 *Framework* language. The language related to essential attributes would be revised to eliminate outdated language, consolidate ideas, and better reflect the proposed system.

Topic 2: Roles and Responsibilities of the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation

Preferred Option: **Maintain the current roles and responsibilities of the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation as defined in California Education Code Section 44372 and 44373 (c) but improve the communication between the COA and the Commission.**

Improve communication by providing on-going reports from COA representatives at Commission meetings as appropriate, but more frequently than annual reporting. The COA will investigate and implement processes that will allow the Commission to better determine how its accreditation policies are being implemented.

Background: California Education Code Section 44372 delineates the powers and duties of the Commission as it relates to accreditation and section 44373 (c) delineates the powers and duties of the Committee on Accreditation. In sum, the Commission establishes accreditation policies, appoints members of the COA, and hears appeals of accreditation decisions. The COA implements the accreditation system and renders accreditation decisions.

California Education Code Section 44373 (c) (5) requires the Committee on Accreditation to present an annual report to the Commission. Over the past decade, the Committee on Accreditation has produced and presented annual reports to the Commission. Beyond these annual reports, there has been little other interaction between the Committee on Accreditation and the Commission.

Rationale: The COA and the Work Group have agreed that the composition, roles, and responsibilities of the COA as currently defined by the Education Code have been beneficial for several reasons. First, the COA is composed of professional educators from both K-12 and higher education who are distinct from the Commission but who are appointed by the Commission because of their distinguished careers in education. Maintaining the current composition of the COA would keep accreditation decisions within the purview of professional educators and maintain a balance of K-12 and higher education. Second, having a body distinct from the Commission has allowed sufficient time for deliberation and depth of discussion required for making accreditation decisions. It was the general opinion of the members of both the COA and the Work Group that the Commission currently has a full workload without adding accreditation decision-making.

However, the Committee on Accreditation and the Accreditation Study Work Group agreed that there ought to be improved communication between the Commission and the Committee. It was agreed that annual reporting alone is insufficient given the critical nature of accreditation. Increasing the Commission's interaction with the COA will foster greater understanding of accreditation issues, allow the Commission more opportunity to determine whether its policies are being appropriately implemented, and allow for discussion of trends and issues related to accreditation matters. Further, more opportunity for Commission discussion about accreditation will raise the visibility of accreditation and provide greater recognition of the importance of this Commission on Teacher Credentialing function.

Topic 3: Accreditation as an On-Going Activity

Preferred Option: **Modify the system such that accreditation becomes an on-going activity instead of a once every six year event. Accreditation should include an on-going cycle of activities focused on accountability, meeting Commission standards, and data-driven decision making. Each institution's prior accreditation report and continuing data reports should be considered in the accreditation system.**

Background: Currently, the accreditation system examines an institution every six years with a "snapshot" approach – that is, the review team is limited to the information about the institution available at that time. Previous documentation and accreditation decisions are not considered by the review team or the COA. The COA decides on an accreditation finding on the institution. If the finding is "Accreditation," the institution is permitted to continue to operate its programs and is not required to provide further information to the COA until the next scheduled review. If an institution receives the status of "Accreditation with Stipulations," it must take action to satisfactorily address the stipulations within one year, and no follow up occurs beyond that next year until the next scheduled review.

Rationale: The Committee on Accreditation and the Accreditation Study Work Group agreed that the snapshot approach does not sufficiently promote on-going program improvement at institutions and districts. Instead many faculty and administrators involved in credential programs treat accreditation as a cyclical event they "go through" and then do not have to think about again until the next site visit. While the accreditation process can and does, encourage the kind of dialogue that prompts positive change, many suggest that once the site visit is complete, the same level of focus on issues of program quality and effectiveness is not consistently maintained over the intervening years.

Further, the COA and the Work Group also agreed that the snapshot approach does not assure a sufficient level of accountability. As an example, a review team may have significant concerns about an institution or a program that leads to a stipulation. Under the existing system, it is difficult for the review team to know whether a concern has been raised by previous review teams and thus is indicative of an ongoing issue at the institution, or whether the concern is of a more recent or isolated nature.

If the change in focus of accreditation is that it is no longer viewed as a "snapshot" or point in time process, but rather a look at an institution over time, the use of historical data, including continuing reports, can and should be considered for use in the accreditation system. Under such a system, full "accreditation" would no longer mean that an institution had no responsibilities related to accreditation between reviews. On the contrary, accreditation activities and reporting of performance data would be required of all institutions and programs throughout the cycle. Likewise, follow up and corrective action on issues of concern would not be limited to one year. The COA would have the ability to follow-up on an area of concern over the next few years to ensure that the programs being offered continue to meet the Commission's adopted standards.

Topic 4: Accreditation Cycle and Activities

Preferred Option: 4a: Revise the accreditation cycle from a single site visit once every 6 years, to a series of accreditation activities over the course of 7 years;

Preferred Option: 4b: Revise the cycle from a 3-4 day comprehensive site visit conducted every six years to a system that includes annual data collection by the institution or program sponsor;

Preferred Option: 4c: Require program sponsors to submit biennial reports to the COA;

Preferred Option: 4d: Retain and revise the review of documents submitted by all credential programs in the 4th year of the 7 year cycle;

Preferred Option: 4e: Retain and revise a site visit in the 6th year of the 7 year cycle focusing on Common Standards and where needed, Program Standards; and

Preferred Option: 4f: Use the 7th year in the cycle for required follow up.

Background: The current accreditation system utilizes a site visit at the institution once every five or six years to evaluate institution and program quality. The site visit team reviews all individual programs, program documentation, supporting evidence, and the institution as a whole during the one visit. No activities are required of institutions/program sponsors in the intervening years unless there has been a stipulation placed on the institution by the COA. All stipulations must be addressed within one year, after which time no ongoing accreditation activities are required

Rationale: The COA and the Work Group believe the structure and cycle of the accreditation system can be improved upon to encourage program improvement and public accountability on a more consistent basis. The proposed structure would require that the same type of activities – review of program documentation and information from candidates, graduates, employers, and faculty – take place across time, rather than at a single point in time. By collecting specific information from programs at multiple times during the accreditation cycle, the COA and Work Group believe that reviewers will have a more accurate understanding of the institution and its programs.

Under the proposed system, a variety of accreditation activities would take place throughout a seven year cycle and build upon one another. Table 2, on page 11, provides a concise summary of the types of activities and the frequency of each activity. It is believed that this on-going cycle of activities is more likely to accomplish the four primary objectives of accreditation than the current system.

Annual Data Gathering and Analysis: Each program would be expected to collect contextual, demographic, and candidate competence data. The program would aggregate and analyze these data, use data to evaluate program effectiveness, and make adjustments as appropriate.

Table 2: Accreditation Cycle and Activities

	Institution or Program Sponsors			Commission on Teacher Credentialing Committee on Accreditation and/or CTC Staff will Review
	At the Institution	Submit to CTC/COA		
Year 1	• Data Gathering & Analysis			• Although no formal report is required, institution may be completing follow-up from the site visit in Year 6. All institutions will continue data gathering and analysis.
Year 2	• Data Gathering & Analysis	Data Report Years 1 & 2		• Biennial Data Report: Staff review of the report could result in a request for additional information and/or a focused site visit.
Year 3	• Data Gathering & Analysis • Prepare program document updates			• No report unless there was follow-up from questions generated from the Year 2 Biennial Report. • Data gathering and analysis is on-going at the institution
Year 4	• Submit Program Document(s) • Data Gathering & Analysis	Data Report* Years 3 & 4	Program Review Document (s)	• Biennial Data Report: Staff review of the report could result in a request for additional information and/or a focused site visit. • Program reviewers are assigned to review each program's documentation and pose questions for institution. • Program review teams agree on preliminary findings for program standards.
Year 5	• Data Gathering & Analysis • Prepare Common Standards self-study for site visit		Response to questions on program review	• Program reviewers submit preliminary findings and remaining questions or concerns to the COA, with recommendations for any needed follow-up at the site visit. • COA determines which, if any program(s) need to be included in the site visit and notifies institution at least one year prior to the site visit date.
Year 6	• Data Gathering & Analysis • Complete preparations for site visit • Host site visit	Data Report Years 5 & 6	Common Standards Self-Study	• Site team is provided with preliminary findings from program review teams and all previous documentation from this cycle. Team is also provided with prior accreditation team report. • Site team visits the institution reviewing all Common Standards and program(s) identified by the Program Reviews. • Site team submits an accreditation report to COA, with recommendations. • COA makes an accreditation decision and specifies required follow-up if necessary.
Year 7	• Data Gathering & Analysis • Follow-up to site visit if necessary		Follow-up to site visit, if necessary	• COA reviews follow-up, if warranted, asks further questions. Follow up may exceed one year at the discretion of the COA. • After completing the seven year cycle, the institution begins the cycle again

* Data related to approved subject matter programs is submitted in Year 4

Report to the Commission/COA (Years 2, 4, and 6): The institution would report summary data for each program for the current and prior year to the Commission. Each program would submit information describing how candidate competence is assessed in the program and how the candidates perform on those assessments. In addition, each report would include a brief statement of analysis and an action plan based on the analysis. Each institution or program sponsor would also submit an institutional summary, identifying trends across the programs or critical issues. The COA and Commission staff would review the biennial reports. If the report is not submitted, or is incomplete or inadequate, Commission staff would contact the institution/program. Institutions that submit reports with data that do not demonstrate measures of candidate competence or that have other deficiencies would be reviewed by COA and could result in a request for additional information from the institution/program or possibly a site review.

Program Review (Years 4 and 5): Each program that is offered by an institution/program sponsor would submit an updated version of its approved program document including current course syllabi. The update would detail all modifications in the program since its prior approval. In addition, the candidate assessments, rubrics, and scoring procedures that generated the data gathered over the current year and previous three years would be submitted. Program reviewers comprised of trained members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers would review each program through a review of updates to approved program documents, data reports, and the reports to the Commission/COA. The program review team could raise questions or request additional information. The program would submit additional information and evidence to address the questions that the reviewers have raised. Specific time limits would need to be observed by both the program and the reviewers so that the preliminary findings would be submitted to the COA at least one year prior to the scheduled site visit. The program review team would consider all information and agree upon "preliminary findings" for all program standards. The program review team submits any additional questions or areas of concern to the COA and makes a   recommendation to COA whether the issue needs to be further reviewed at the site visit. The COA would consider the recommendation and in so doing, would determine the nature of the program review including the size and composition of the team that would take place during the site visit.

Site Visit (Year 6): Each institution or program sponsor would have an accreditation team visit the site in the sixth year of the accreditation cycle. Prior to the visit, the institution would submit a self-study document that responds to the Common Standards. The institution would prepare for a site visit that focuses mainly on the Common Standards, but includes information and interviews with students, graduates, and faculty as well as other stakeholders from all programs that are sponsored by the institution. The site review team would be composed of 3 to 6 members that would focus on the Common Standards plus any program areas directed to be reviewed by the COA as a result of the previously completed program review. Within the site visit, each program in operation would participate fully in the interview schedule. The COA may add additional members to the team with expertise in the program area(s) to be reviewed at the site visit. The site review team would submit a report with program findings and an accreditation recommendation to the COA. It is possible that the site visit team may find a program concern or issue not previously identified by the program reviewers. In so doing, the team may recommend a follow up focused program review of the concerns or issues that have arisen. In this event, there would be no accreditation recommendation until after the focused review has

been completed. The COA would review the team report and ask questions prior to making an accreditation decision. When follow-up is required, the COA would indicate what follow-up is required and when it would occur.

Follow-up to site visit: (Year 7) If necessary, the institution and all its programs would begin to respond to the follow-up required by the COA. COA will state the timeline for response from the institution. Institutions must address all stipulations within one year, however, the timeline for COA follow up may extend beyond the one year.

Topic 5: Unit Accreditation and Program Approval

Preferred Option: **Revise the system such that it addresses unit accreditation and enhances program review.**

Background: Currently, California's accreditation system involves a single accreditation decision for the institution, in other words, unit accreditation. The individual programs are approved within the process of coming to the institution's accreditation decision. This system is often referred to as "unit plus" because it focuses on the program sponsor and all its credential programs.

Rationale: In gathering feedback from the constituencies represented on the Work Group, it was clear that there is overwhelming support for continuing a "unit" based system. Deans and administrators of education preparation commented that the unit based system allows them some degree of leverage with the university or district to initiate or implement improvements in programs, particularly with those programs that are out of their direct control. However, concerns were raised that accreditation review team members have sometimes failed to sufficiently address program concerns in the report for fear of risking the accreditation status of the institution. This seemed to occur most often with larger institutions that might have one identified weak program among several strong programs. It was acknowledged that this is in part a structural issue and, in part, one of implementation and training.

One of the major ways in which the proposed system will enhance program review is that under the proposed system, findings for each standard of each credential program would be included in the accreditation report, rather than just findings on the common standards. In addition, the program review team would recommend whether review of a particular program should be part of a larger site visit at the institution or district office.

Topic 6: Establish consistency in the system by including all Credential and Certificate Programs in the Accreditation Process

Preferred Option: **Adopt the general principle that all programs that lead to a credential or certificate in California should be reviewed on a periodic basis and that the review process should be implemented in a manner that recognizes program differences but maintains comparable rigor across program types.**

Background: Currently, not all programs that a program sponsor may elect to offer are reviewed through the continuing accreditation system.

Rationale: The COA and the Work Group suggest that the Commission adopt a broad policy that all credential programs are subject to review on a periodic basis and are a part of the accreditation system. The COA and the Work Group recognize that this recommendation may

have significant cost implications. The types of credential programs that are not currently part of the accreditation system include:

- Subject Matter Programs
- Certificate Programs (i.e. CLAD, BCLAD, Early Childhood)
- Designated Subjects Programs-sponsored by a LEA
- Professional Clear Credential Programs (Induction and Fifth Year)
- Professional Clear Guidelines-based Administrative Services Programs

Each credential program not currently included in the continuing accreditation process brings with it unique issues that would need to be addressed if they were brought into the system. For instance, induction programs were only recently added as a credential route as a result of SB 2042, although they have been operating in California for a number of years. Though they have not traditionally been part of the Commission's accreditation process they have been subject to rigorous program review process through their funding agencies.

Reaching agreement on the above topics would allow staff, in consultation with the Committee on Accreditation and the stakeholders, to begin the process for implementation of the revised system in 2007-08 as discussed by the Commission at the May/June 2006 Commission meeting.

Recommendations that May be Considered and Discussed at the Next Commission Meeting

Several recommendations, while still central to implementing a revised accreditation process, are less time sensitive and may, if the Commission wishes, be deliberated either at this meeting or at the September meeting without impacting the projected implementation schedule. These items are as follows:

- ***Topic 7: Program Standard Options***

- ***Topic 8: Accreditation Decisions-Program Findings***

- ***Topic 9: Accreditation Decisions-Unit Findings***

- ***Topic 10: Selection of COA Members***

- ***Topic 13: Evaluation of the Accreditation System***

Implementation Issues

Once the Commission adopts revised accreditation policies, there will be many implementation issues to be addressed. During implementation of the revised accreditation system, the COA will be responsible for developing the many procedures that will support implementation of the Commission's policies. The COA will seek advice from stakeholders and Commission members prior to modification of procedures. Listed below are four of the implementation issues that the Work Group and COA have already discussed:

- ***Topic 14: Training -- Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR)***

- ***Topic 15: Selection of the Review Teams***

- ***Topic 16: Selection of Interviews and Site Visits***

- ***Topic 17: Data Collection***

On-Going Work Required

In the coming months, the Committee on Accreditation and the stakeholders will continue to work on several areas that require additional stakeholder discussion. These include the following topics:

- *Topic 6: Establish consistency in the system by including all Credential and Certificate Programs in the Accreditation Process.* If the Commission agrees with the general principle listed above, additional work would need to be done with respect to the individual credential areas not currently covered by accreditation.
  - ➢ Topic 6a: Designated Subjects Programs
  - ➢ Topic 6b: Professional Administrative Services Credential Programs
  - ➢ Topic 6c: Fifth Year Programs
  - ➢ Topic 6d: Induction Programs
  - ➢ Topic 6e: Subject Matter Programs

- *Topic 18: Additional work for Accreditation Study Work Group and the COA*
  Topic 18 areas are related to the proposed changes to standards themselves. Because this was not within the original charge of the accreditation review process, stakeholders and the COA were reticent to begin work in this area. However, it became clear in discussions on accreditation that some standards required greater alignment with the process being proposed. At the October 2005 Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to continue to work with stakeholders on these issues. In particular, two areas in which work has begun include the Common, or Unit, Standards and the Experimental Program Standards. Because the Common Standards are central to the accreditation review, if the Commission were to agree to maintain a system that includes a unit review in addition to program review, a revised set of standards would be provided for Commission consideration in the near future. The timeframe for bringing proposed new Experimental Standards to the Commission is more flexible. A subgroup of the work group and COA are developing language for both of these sets of standards.

  Additional recommendations were made about Preconditions, Blended Program Standards, and the "required elements" structure of SB 2042. Additional work on these topics will take considerable time and can be brought forward at a time that is appropriate in the future.

Recommendations:

1) That the Commission act to start accreditation site visits in 2007-2008.

2) That the Commission endorse the COA priorities for consideration in scheduling accreditation visits for 2007-08 and beyond.

3) That the Commission act on the first six topics of the recommendations presented by the Accreditation Study Work Group and the COA

Upon Commission action on the above recommendations, staff would engage in the following accreditation activities and report back to the Commission:

a) Staff would return to the Commission as soon as possible with proposed language for a new *Accreditation Framework* for consideration and adoption by the Commission on those items where there is commission approval.

b) Staff would bring the recommendations for Topics 7-10 & 13 to the September Commission meeting.

c) Staff would continue to work with stakeholders on revisions to the Common Standards to more closely align with the objectives of the revised system such as candidate outcomes, and return as soon as possible on draft revised language for consideration by the Commission.

d) Staff would continue to work on Topics 6a-6e, 11, and 12 with the COA and the stakeholders and return to the Commission for consideration and action when appropriate.

e) Staff would continue to work with the stakeholders and, where appropriate, the Office of the Secretary of Education on determining the nexus between state accreditation and national accreditation.

f) Staff would continue to work with the COA and stakeholders on the Experimental Program Standards, the Preconditions, Blended Standards and the required elements topics with the COA and stakeholders and return to the Commission for consideration, direction, and action when appropriate.